

**John and Deb Bruihler of Rushford have been named the 2014 Fillmore County Outstanding Conservationists. They were also named Area 7 winners and were honored at a luncheon on December 9th the MASWCD Annual Convention held at the Doubletree by Hilton Bloomington Minneapolis South.**

The Bruihlers farm about 1500 acres in Minnesota and Iowa with most acres in a corn/soybean rotation with some hay and small grains. Since the 1980s, when John started farming, he has no-tilled his crops. In the beginning, yields weren't great, but John saw the advantages of no-till and has farmed that way ever since. Some of their fields have not been tilled for more than 20 years.

Even with no-till, they feel they have experienced more erosion than what is acceptable. Waterways and buffer strips have helped, but they continue to seek ways to slow down soil loss. For the last five years, they have been using cover crops trying various mixes and seeding dates with mixed results.

GPS technology is used by the Bruihlers for pesticide applications to prevent overlap and overapplication. They regularly scout their fields for insects and diseases and have added row shut-offs on their planter to help them increase the number of waterways and grass strips.



The Bruihlers have land that includes woods and timber. John remembers, as a boy, planting many acres of trees on his father's farm which have now grown into a forest and are a haven for wildlife. John and Deb continue the tradition by planting 500 or more trees at a time. They have worked with state foresters to draft timberstand management plans on three of their farms.

John and Deb have taken an active interest in no-till and have attended ten national and one Canadian conference where John has participated as a panel member and presenter several times. Locally, John has led the effort to encourage more cover crops as the Chair of the Rush-Pine Watershed Farmer Led Council.

The Bruihlers have spent time teaching beekeeping and agriculture in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Africa. John has also volunteered many times to drive to Mexico with donations for people in need. Deb volunteers at the Grace Place Ministries and Thrift Store.

**The Bruihlers exemplify the innovation and experience needed in the farming community to move forward and keep our land productive and our water clean. The Fillmore SWCD congratulates John and Deb Bruihler on being selected our 2014 Conservationists of the Year.**

